

South Dakota National Guard

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SD Guard members showcase marksmanship skills during competition

RAPID CITY, S.D. – More than 100 South Dakota National Guard members from across the state came together to compete in the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match in Rapid City, March 17-19.

The competition held at West Camp Rapid allows both Soldiers and Airmen to showcase their marksmanship skills or enhance their current abilities.

Although the event is competition driven, at its core is advanced marksmanship training and techniques. Service members receive safety guidance and advanced preliminary marksmanship instructions prior to firing any rounds.

"The ultimate goal for this event is to raise the standards of marksmanship and increase the lethality and readiness across our force," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Sam Schaefer, event volunteer and competitor from the 147th Forward Support Company. "The intent is twofold, enhance the marksmanship skills of the individual shooter and teach them valuable skills that they can pass along to their unit."

Soldiers and Airmen also compete for top honors in unit teams and as individuals in combat rifle and pistol disciplines. The top 20 percent of each shooting discipline also qualify to earn the Governor's Twenty Tab – a state-level marksmanship award.

While the competition allows for Soldiers and Airmen to obtain bragging rights, Schaefer said the awards come secondary to the true intent of this match.

"This competition helps create combat multipliers," he said. "The ability to shoot accurately is a basic combat skill. Shooters at this event complete several courses of fire that involved many stress factors to include time, multiple targets and round counts, as well as different shooting positions. These courses of fire are designed to stress the shooter and mimic combat scenarios – all in order to hone marksmanship skills."

Schaefer said the annual match is typically held around the same weekend each year and is an excellent training opportunity for any shooter looking to improve their skills.

"Whether you are a seasoned shooter looking to hone your skills or a novice that would like training and familiarization beyond the standard individual weapons qualification course, you may want to look into trying it out," said Schaefer.

The annual Outdoor Match is planned and organized by Joint Force Headquarters' marksmanship section along with the assistance of volunteers from other units.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



170318-Z-ZZ999-0001 – U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Adam Witte, 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, takes aim during the reflexive fire competition during the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., March 18, 2017. This match works up to a pace of six rounds being fired on three separate targets in a time limit of only four seconds from the standing position. (U.S. Army National Guard photo)



170318-Z-ZZ999-0002 – U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Wells, Joint Force Headquarters, South Dakota Army National Guard, monitors the firing line on the pistol range during the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., March 18, 2017. Wells and other volunteers worked various positions needed to conduct the training event from ammo detail and maintaining targets to coaching shooters and providing marksmanship instruction. (U.S. Army National Guard photo)



170318-Z-ZZ999-0003 – A South Dakota Army National Guard Soldier engages multiple targets with differing amounts of rounds in different time limits during the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., March 18, 2017. The competition allows both Soldiers and Airmen to showcase their marksmanship skills. (U.S. Army National Guard photo)



170318-Z-ZZ999-0004 – A severed piece of wood from the target line at the West Camp Rapid pistol range after the conclusion of day two of the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match in Rapid City, S.D., March 18, 2017. More than 100 Soldiers and Airmen fired an average of 155 rounds of 9mm ammunition during the competition to showcase their marksmanship skills. (U.S. Army National Guard photo)

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